

Body of DEA Agent Is Found in Mexico

By William A. Orme Jr.
Special to The Washington Post

MEXICO CITY, March 6—The bodies of kidnaped U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration agent Enrique Camarena Salazar and a Mexican colleague were found this morning near the rural home of a family of accused narcotics traffickers who died last weekend in a police shoot-out, Mexican and U.S. officials announced.

Preliminary identification based on clothing was made by U.S. and Mexican authorities this afternoon in Guadalajara, U.S. Ambassador

John Gavin reported. "There is a high degree of certainty that it is them," said Francisco Fonseca, chief spokesman for Mexico's attorney general, adding that a formal Mexican government statement on the case might not be issued until Thursday, "when all the facts are known."

The two men apparently were killed shortly after their abduction a month ago, Mexican sources said. Gavin said the two had been dead "at least 15 days" and he knew of no evidence to support reports that the bodies showed signs of torture. Fo-

rensic reports were awaited on cause of death.

[In Washington, DEA Acting Administrator Jack Lawn said the bodies "had been subjected to physical violence," with broken bones but no bullet wounds. Details on A16.]

Calling the murders of Camarena and Alfredo Zavala Avelar "losses in an ongoing war," Gavin noted that several Mexican police were killed—reportedly five—today in a confrontation with marijuana traffickers near San Fernando, about 70 miles south of Mexico's eastern border with Texas.

Although the discovery repre-

sents "the first real breakthrough in the case," apparent discrepancies in the officially reported details of the raid that led to the recovery of the corpses have caused "confusion" regarding the kidnapers' presumed motives and identities, U.S. sources said. "There are a lot of inconsistencies, a lot of holes in the story," said one.

Discovered near the city of Zamora in the state of Michoacan, the badly decomposed bodies were transported for autopsies to Guadalajara, capital of neighboring Jalisco state. Camarena and Zavala

See MEXICO, A16, Col. 1

DEA Agent's Body Found At Site of Mexican Shoot-Out

MEXICO, From A1

a Mexican government pilot who had flown missions for the DEA here, had been kidnaped Feb. 7 in separate incidents in different parts of Guadalajara.

While the location of the bodies apparently was revealed by an anonymous Mexican police informant, the \$50,000 U.S. government reward remains unclaimed, Gavin said.

The corpses were reportedly found at 4 a.m. in plastic bags on property behind the home of Manuel Bravo Cervantes, who was killed on Saturday with his wife and two sons in a confrontation with Mexican police. A former Michoacan state congressman, Bravo Cervantes was said by Mexican federal officials to be involved in drug-running, car theft and highway assaults in the Michoacan-Jalisco region.

"They were not major drug traffickers," one informed U.S. source said.

According to police reports, all four members of the Bravo family responded to surrender demands with rifle fire, prompting a prolonged exchange in which one federal judicial police agent died after being hit with 17 bullets from an AR15 semiautomatic rifle.

When police burst into the family's modest cement-block home, Bravo Cervantes' wife, wounded on the floor, fired a handgun at the agents, who shot back and killed her, they later reported. Her husband and sons already were dead, they said.

The gunbattle, in which federal and Jalisco state police participated,

provoked an unusual protest from the governor of Michoacan, who complained in a message yesterday to the governor of Jalisco and to Federal Attorney General Sergio Garcia Ramirez that his state's "sovereignty" had been violated. Michoacan state police learned of the clash "only after the firefight had begun" and were forcibly kept at a distance by federal authorities on the scene, Gov. Cuauhtemoc Cardenas said.

Five suspects arrested at or near the Bravo home Saturday were brought to Guadalajara for questioning and released late Monday evening. Among them were the wives of the two Bravo sons who died in the gunfight. The two women were detained, police reports said, while driving a car stocked with ammunition.

"If this is true, it seems odd that they would simply be let go," a U.S. source commented.

Some local officials and residents questioned the official account of the armed confrontation, with several contending that the Bravos were denied an opportunity to give themselves up. "They were victimized," said Octavio Ortiz, chief spokesman for Michoacan's state government. If the Bravos had been arrested alive, Ortiz suggested today in a telephone interview, "they might also have been released like the others were."

The Bravos lived in an unprepossessing two-story home along the main road in the small rural settlement of La Angostura. Much of the village turned out yesterday for the funeral and burial of the Bravo family, according to local press reports.

Mexican federal police reported



the confiscation from the Bravo home of two pounds of cocaine and several high-powered weapons, including two AR15s and three M1s.

For more than a year prior to his kidnaping, Camarena was involved in Operation Godfather, a joint U.S.-Mexican investigation of Mexican cocaine smuggling. DEA agent Edward Heath, who runs the agency's Mexican program, was at the Bravo home this morning to assist in the identification of Camarena's body, sources reported.

No DEA agent, however, witnessed Saturday's gunfight, although one arrived "after the dust had cleared," the sources said. The Bravo clan were not among those suspected of involvement in the kidnaping by DEA agents here, U.S. sources said.

A former federal police agent believed by DEA to have information on Camarena's whereabouts was released last week after a day of questioning. "We are satisfied that he was not involved" in the Camarena abduction, a U.S. Embassy spokesman said.

U.S. officials repeatedly have urged Mexican law enforcement officers to prosecute the leaders of the "18 major gangs" of traffickers that DEA says operate in Mexico. Yesterday, Luis Octavio Porte Pet-it, Mexico's deputy attorney general, formally asked the U.S. Embassy here to provide "concrete information" about key figures in Mexico's narcotics trade.

DEA Cites Data Indicating Agent Beaten Not Shot

By Loretta Tofani
Washington Post Staff Writer

The bodies found yesterday in Mexico, apparently including that of a missing Drug Enforcement Administration agent, "had been subjected to physical violence," Acting DEA Administrator Jack Lawn said last night.

Lawn quoted a medical examiner in Mexico as saying the two had broken bones and one had a gash across his head that could have been the cause of death.

No bullet wounds were reported, Lawn said at a press conference. The bodies thought to be those of Enrique Camarena Salazar and a Mexican pilot were wrapped in plastic and "dumped on a roadside," he said. The pilot had flown missions for DEA.

The bodies, which were decomposed, previously had been buried at another location and exhumed, according to a DEA source.

The bodies were discovered on a roadside near Zamora by Mexican federal police, who were acting on a tip, Lawn said. Lawn said he is in "regular contact" with the State Department, Attorney General Edwin Meese and the White House about the incident.

Camarena, 37, a Mexican-born naturalized American with nearly 11 years' experience at the DEA, was abducted Feb. 7 as he left his Guadalajara office to have lunch with his wife. An eyewitness told DEA investigators that Camarena was grabbed by four armed men and thrown face down into a car. The pilot was abducted the same day in a different section of the city.

VOL. 296 NUMBER 94

U.S. fears agent dead in Mexico

Tentative ID made of decomposed body

By James Bock
Mexico City Bureau of The Sun

MEXICO CITY — The body of a kidnapped American drug agent has apparently been found at a Mexican ranch, U.S. officials here said yesterday.

Ambassador John Gavin said a "preliminary identification" left only "a frail and flimsy hope" that the badly decomposed body was not that of Enrique Camarena Salazar, a 37-year-old veteran drug agent. Mr. Camarena was kidnapped February 7 by four armed men outside the U.S. Consulate in Guadalajara.

Another body recovered at El Mareno, a ranch 90 miles southeast of Guadalajara, was tentatively identified as that of Alfredo Zavala Avelar, a Mexican pilot involved in the joint U.S.-Mexican drug eradication program who was kidnapped the same day as Mr. Camarena in Guadalajara.

El Mareno was the site of a shootout on Saturday that left five persons dead after Mexican police raided the ranch looking for the drug agent and the pilot. No trace of the missing men was reported, however, until yesterday.

The bodies, which had been dead at least 15 days, were badly decomposed and the preliminary identification of Mr. Camarena was made from clothing, Mr. Gavin said. U.S. officials were present, he said, when the bodies were examined at a hospital in Zamora, about 20 miles east of the ranch.

The bodies were to be flown to Guadalajara last night for positive identification based on dental records and other forensic materials, the ambassador said.

Mr. Gavin said there were "conflicting reports" concerning how and when the bodies were found.

He said U.S. officials were told that a search for the kidnapped men had been abandoned at the ranch Tuesday night, but that "very early in the morning they told us the bodies had been found."

A U.S. Embassy spokesman said

See MEXICO, 4A, Col. 5

THURSDAY

MARCH 7, 1985

THURSDAY MARCH 7, 1985

Kidnapped U.S. agent feared dead in Mexico

MEXICO, from 1A

no American officials were present when the bodies were discovered.

A Red Cross volunteer in Zamora, Jaime Arizaga, said in a phone interview that he and three others were called to the ranch at 5 a.m. yesterday, but arrived to find the bodies in plastic bags atop a patrol car and the ranch sealed off by Mexican Federal Judicial Police.

Mexican television reported that the bodies were found buried in plastic bags in a lemon grove, their hands and feet tied, and that they had been badly beaten. One report said the two men had been tortured and buried alive.

The Mexican Attorney General's Office provided no immediate details.

The Saturday raid on the ranch was launched after Mexican authorities in Guadalajara received an anonymous tip that the two men were being held there, Mr. Gavin said. A Mexican police agent was among those killed in the shootout.

No evidence of drug trafficking was found at the ranch, but "we still believe major drug traffickers were involved in the kidnapping," said Lee Johnson, an embassy spokesman.

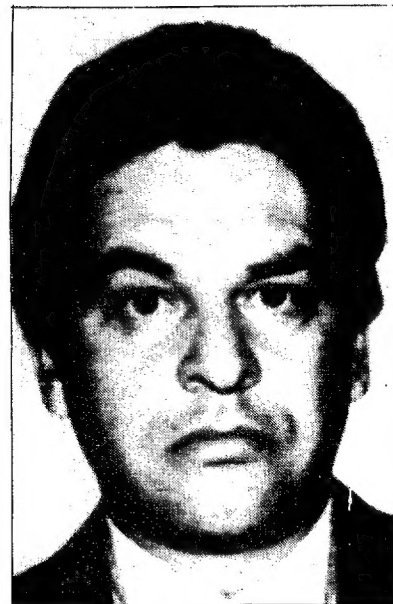
Mr. Gavin said the United States was receiving "good cooperation from the Mexican authorities at this time."

U.S. accusations last month that corrupt Mexican officials were stalling the Camarena investigation put severe strains on U.S.-Mexican relations.

The U.S. mounted Operation Intercept, a 10-day program of exhaustive car-by-car searches that nearly paralyzed commerce and tourism along the 1,700-mile border, to catch Mexican officials' attention.

Only a February 22 telephone call from Mexican President Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado to President Reagan, protesting Operation Intercept, began to restore normalcy to U.S.-Mexican relations. U.S. officials said they believed the border operation helped inject vigor into the Camarena investigation.

The episode's effect on the conduct of a meeting next week between Mexican Foreign Minister Bernardo



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kidnapped agent Enrique Camarena Salazar is believed dead.

Sepulveda and Secretary of State George P. Shultz in Washington.

A shootout yesterday morning at a highway checkpoint in northern Mexico left five police officers dead. They were reportedly machine-gunned by drug traffickers protecting a truckload of marijuana.

Mr. Gavin called the drug fight an "ongoing war" and said, "There is a very real possibility that our own agents may once again suffer these kinds of attacks."

The United States closed nine remote crossings on the Mexican border last weekend because of threats on American officials.

Mitterrand seeks to raise French speakers' profile

President Francois Mitterrand yesterday launched a crusade to expand the influence of the French-speaking world in the face of a growing Anglo-Saxon onslaught.

Mr. Mitterrand, who speaks no foreign language, hosted the first meeting of the Francophone High Commission of 28 French-speaking writers, political figures and artists.